

**ISRAEL DENIES SUPPLYING ARMS TO NICARAGUA REBELS; DENOUNCES REPORTS IT IS DOING SO AS 'BASELESS RUMORS'**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) -- Israel issued a categorical denial yesterday that it is supplying arms to Nicaragua rebels and denounced reports that it was doing so as "baseless rumors."

The denial, by Foreign Ministry spokesman Yosef Amihoud, followed a report in the United States Monday on NBC television news that Israel was supplying Soviet-made weapons to rebels fighting the Sandinista government, at the behest of the U.S.

In its report from a Contra rebel base in Honduras, NBC showed a 47-year-old C-47 transport plane landing at an airstrip some 110 miles from Managua, Nicaragua, bringing supplies for the 11,000 U.S.-backed guerrillas fighting to topple the leftist Nicaraguan government. Contra leader Enrique Bermudez told NBC, "We received some weapons from Israel. The weapons were taken from the PLO in Lebanon" during the war.

NBC claimed that Israel was supplying 25 percent of the rebels' arms under an agreement reached during a visit in 1982 to Honduras by then Israel Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. The report said the rebels wanted Soviet weapons because they could supplement them with arms captured from Nicaraguan forces which were supplied by Cuba and the Soviet Union. NBC also said that the aged C-47 plane that served as the Contras lifeline was supplied by the U.S.

**'A Mean Attempt To Slur Israel's Standing'**

Amihoud, in his statement, said Israel "denied altogether these baseless rumors ... They are ridiculous. This is a mean attempt to slur Israel's standing abroad and international reputation." A Foreign Ministry official said the denial applied equally to the "rumors" that Israel was extending military training aid -- also at the behest of the U.S. -- to the government forces of El Salvador.

Foreign press reports said that the U.S. is funnelling funds into "third countries" for the purpose of arming anti-leftist government and rebel forces. Israel, in these reports, was included among the "third countries."

(In Washington, State Department deputy spokesman Alan Romberg said yesterday that the U.S. "has no intention of providing funds for third countries for the purpose of supporting covert activities." Romberg, who was repeating an earlier State Department statement, refused any comment on Israeli activities in Central America. But officials here have denied that the U.S. is urging Israel to take a more active part in the region.)

**An Awkward Moment For Israel**

The American TV report came at an especially awkward moment for Israel. Last night, Foreign Ministry Director-General David Kimche left for Washington to hold talks with Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Lawrence Eagleburger and his successor, Michael Armacost, who

is leaving his post as Ambassador to the Philippines, which reportedly will include Central American issues.

The Foreign Ministry said these issues were concerned with technical and agriculture aid that Israel extends to a number of Central American countries. The Ministry said Kimche would not discuss military aid -- because there is none.

(Romberg pointed out yesterday that the meeting between Kimche and Eagleburger tomorrow and Friday, is part of a routine series of meetings between the two in Jerusalem and Washington. One acknowledged purpose of the meeting is for Kimche to bid farewell to Eagleburger, who retires next month.)

**MODAI TO HEAD LIBERAL PARTY LIST IN JULY 23 ELECTIONS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) -- The Liberal Party Central Committee voted overwhelmingly for Energy Minister Yitzhak Modai today to head its slate in the July 23 elections.

Modai won 126 votes in the secret ballot against 89 for his closest rival, Justice Minister Moshe Nissim and seven for Knesset Speaker Menachem Savidor. He is therefore assured of the No. 2 spot on the Likud election list and is likely to be named a Deputy Premier, along with Herut's David Levy, should Likud win the election and form the next government.

Under a prior agreement by the 240-member Central Committee, Nissim automatically gained the No. 2 spot on the Liberal slate because he garnered more than a third of the vote. Savidor and the other Committee members are vying for "safe" spots on the slate in balloting that is expected to continue well into the night. The first 16 candidates on the slate are considered fairly certain of election to the next Knesset.

The Liberal Party has 18 seats in the present Knesset and Herut has 26. But the two factions that are the main components of Likud are bitterly at odds over a Herut decision earlier this month to "review" their 20 year-old agreement. Herut activists contend that the Liberals are over-represented in proportion to their electoral strength.

The Liberals, who note that neither party has been tested independently at the polls for two decades, have threatened to end their alliance with Herut if the status quo is tampered with before the elections.

**TWO MKs DEMAND PROBE INTO THE KILLING OF FOUR TERRORISTS WHO HIJACKED A TEL AVIV-ASHKELON BUS**

By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 25 (JTA) -- Two Knesset members have demanded a full scale inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the killing of four terrorists who hijacked a Tel Aviv-to-Ashkelon bus on April 12 with the intention of taking its passengers hostage.

Ehud Olmert of Likud and Victor Shemtov of the opposition Labor Alignment agreed today that the facts must be ascertained to relieve Israel of suspicion, implicit in foreign media reports, that one of the terrorists was murdered after his capture.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens said in a radio interview Monday that he had no reason to disbelieve the army's version of what occurred. He said, however,

that the military is "routinely" examining the incident and would submit a full report to him shortly. According to the army, two of the terrorists were killed instantly when troops stormed the bus in the early hours of Friday, April 13 to rescue the passengers. A third terrorist died of his wounds a short while later and the fourth died on the way to a hospital, the army said. (One Israeli woman soldier, Irit Portuguez, 19, was killed in the shootout and seven passengers were wounded.) The four terrorists, all residents of the Gaza Strip, were buried on April 15 under army supervision.

But an Israeli reporter from the newspaper Hadoshot, who was at the scene, said he saw one of the terrorists, apparently unharmed, being led away from the bus handcuffed by two Israeli plainclothes security men. The reporter took a photograph of the man.

According to reports in the Israeli and foreign media, the photograph was readily identified by friends and relatives as Majdi Abu Jama, 18, of Beni Shuheila village in the Gaza Strip, one of the four men who hijacked the Egged bus.

The army claimed this was a case of mistaken identity. According to the official version, a bus passenger initially mistaken for a terrorist, was held in custody for a while but released after he established his identity as a Jew travelling to Ashkelon. A bus passenger who was not immediately identified was quoted as telling reporters that he was arrested but let go when he produced his identity card.

#### Seek To Clear Israel's Name

Nevertheless, the implication that one of the terrorists was taken alive and was killed while in custody of the Israeli authorities persists. Olmert said today that publication of the story abroad before all the facts were clarified has severely damaged Israel's reputation.

Shemtov said the Israel Defense Force would be well advised "to put on the table all the details regarding the death" of the terrorists in order to clear Israel of the "libel" that is being spread around the world.

He added that "if some aberration occurred, those responsible should be tried." There is no capital punishment in Israel. Captured terrorists convicted of murder are given life sentences.

#### KOLLEK CRITICIZES POPE'S APOSTOLIC LETTER ON JERUSALEM

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) -- Mayor Teddy Kollek said here that Pope John Paul II ignored the complete freedom of worship available to all faiths in Jerusalem when he issued his apostolic letter last week urging "special internationally guaranteed status" for Jerusalem.

In remarks during Easter holiday visits to Greek Orthodox and Catholic prelates in Jerusalem, Kollek maintained that the Pope neglected to take into account Israel's constant efforts to help various Christian denominations in the city.

The Pope's letter, addressed to Catholics in Israel and to all people of the Middle East, repeated the Vatican's longstanding call for the internationally recognized status of Jerusalem "so that one side or the other cannot place it under discrimination." The Pope also said a Palestinian homeland and security for Israel were fundamental requirements for a lasting Mideast peace.

The letter, although it broke no new ground in terms of Vatican policy, was not well received in Israel. A Foreign Ministry spokesman told reporters last week that "Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jewish people throughout history and will remain Israel's capital forever" and that there has never been such complete freedom of worship as that presently available to all faiths under Israeli policy.

#### Holy See's Position For Past 14 Years

But government officials here noted that the Pope did not call for the internationalization of Israel's declared capital, a position the Vatican maintained prior to 1970 but subsequently dropped.

Instead, the Pope was recommending an "internationally guaranteed status"—a formula which had expressed the Holy See's position for the past 14 years. There was no need, therefore, the officials said, for Israel to react diplomatically to the Pontiff's letter.

Kollek, in his conversations with local churchmen, said it was "strange" that the Holy Father had forbore to take note of the "good situation, the good will and readiness to assist" which existed on the part of the Israeli authorities.

The mayor stressed that Jerusalem was not only the Holy City but also the City of Peace. The authorities, he said, were making every effort to counter acts of extremism and non-tolerance "from whichever quarter they emanate."

#### BENVENISTI: REAL ISSUE OF THE WEST BANK IS WHETHER ISRAELIS WANT A JEWISH STATE OR A DEMOCRATIC ONE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 25 (JTA) -- With more than a million West Bank Arabs under Israel's control, Israelis will have to decide whether they want a Jewish state or a democratic one, Meron Benvenisti, former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, declared yesterday.

He explained that if Israel maintains control of the land it will have to decide whether to extend full democratic rights to the West Bank Palestinians. Benvenisti said that none of Israel's political parties and neither hawks nor doves have faced this question which he said is the real issue now before Israel because he "seriously doubts" Israel's control of the West Bank can be reversed. (See separate story on State Department reaction.)

His remarks were made at a press conference at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) at which he presented his study, "The West Bank Data Project: A Survey of Israel's Policies," published by the AEI yesterday.

#### Cites Creeping Annexationism

Benvenisti said that Israel does not have to annex the West Bank or even to extend Israeli law to it as it did on the Golan Heights as it is accomplishing the same goal through "incremental and small steps." He explained that during Israel's nearly 17 years of occupation it has frozen the land available to Palestinians for growth and development to the 1968 level, with the Palestinians maintaining 3 1/2 million dunams of the 5 1/2 million dunams in the West Bank.

Individual Palestinians have prospered under this system but Israel has not allowed the West Bank to develop as a community, Benvenisti said. He noted this was the same policy practiced by Jordan during

its occupation of the West Bank, Benvenisti said Israel has enough land in the West Bank to eventually settle the onemillion Jews the Likud government envisions for that area. This is because most of the new settlers are suburbanites and not farmers.

The first two waves of settlements were in the Jordan Valley under the Labor government, and the Gush Emunim settlements under Likud, Benvenisti said. He said that there are not enough people with the ideological motivation to increase those two types of settlements. He said the government is now concentrating on suburban settlements that will be less than 30 minutes drive from either Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, and expects thus to reach its goal of 100,000 settlers on the West Bank by the end of the decade.

Benvenisti said the government's aim is to create a constituency of West Bank settlers that would be large enough to prevent any future government from withdrawing from the area.

Benvenisti said the problem is no longer military occupation but what to do with the people in the area. He said all the parties involved, including the United States, prefer to maintain the "fiction" that it is military occupation since that is easier to deal with rather than face "reality." He said he did not care whether settlements were legal or illegal. What mattered was the reality of the situation, he added.

Benvenisti said he doubted the U.S. could be helpful in finding a solution because he charged it was incapable of the political involvement necessary. "We should not look for any external power to do the work," he added. "We have to do the work ourselves."

#### Says Arabs, PLO 'Emasculated' The Palestinians

He also maintained that it is the Arab countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization more than Israel that have "emasculated" the Palestinians on the West Bank by refusing to allow them to select their own leaders and labeling any attempt on the part of the West Bank population to deal with Israel as treason. He said the Israeli Arabs and the West Bank Arabs must be allowed to develop their own leaders.

When challenged about including the Israeli Arabs with the West Bankers, he said if the "green line" between Israel and the West Bank is erased for the Jews, then it also has to be erased for the Arabs.

Benvenisti rejected any charge that the Israeli policy on the West Bank resembles the apartheid practiced by South Africa. He said South Africa established apartheid because the whites there see the Blacks as a threat while the Israelis see the Arabs under their control only as a "nuisance."

He said while the Arabs may be unequal in Israel there never will be an apartheid system. Nor would Israel ever consider expulsion of the Arabs from Israel, or the occupied territories, Benvenisti added.

#### U.S. REJECTS BENVENISTI'S VIEW By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 25 (JTA) — The State Department rejected today the view of former Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Meron Benvenisti that Israel's occupation of the West Bank is nearly irreversible.

"We do not believe it is too late for a negotiated resolution of the conflict based on Israel's return of territory in exchange for a just and durable peace," the Department said.

The State Department said that it was aware of Benvenisti's views which he had discussed with Department officials several times. He is scheduled to meet with Richard Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, tomorrow.

The Department said that the U.S. was still committed to President Reagan's September 1, 1982, Middle East peace initiative and the President's view that United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 committed Israel to a withdrawal on all fronts after a negotiated settlement.

#### B'NAI B'RITH LEADER URGES REAGAN TO PUSH SENATE RATIFICATION OF THE GENOCIDE CONVENTION

WASHINGTON, April 25 (JTA) — B'nai B'rith International has urged President Reagan to use "strong Presidential leadership" to encourage the U.S. Senate to ratify the Genocide Convention. In a letter to the White House, Gerald Kraft, president of B'nai B'rith noted that every Administration in the last quarter-century had endorsed accession to the treaty and that the State Department also has approved "action aimed at achieving ratification."

"It was five years ago that the United States created the President's Commission on the Holocaust which launched the historic and vital effort to recall the searing trauma of our era," Kraft declared.

The Commission noted then that "there yet remains an uncompleted task for those who choose to remember the Holocaust," he said. The Commission, he went on, stated that ratification of the Genocide Convention "is essential" for "the knowledge that perpetrators will be held responsible for the crime of genocide can play some role in preventing such acts in the future."

The B'nai B'rith leader recalled that the Convention was unanimously adopted by the United Nations in 1948 "as a response of civilized society to the Nazi Holocaust and to prevent its recurrence. It was the very first human rights treaty enacted by the UN and, not surprisingly, was largely the product of American initiative and lobbying."

"In keeping with the distinctively American tradition to promote human rights and the rule of law worldwide," Kraft said, "President Truman first asked the Senate in 1949 to consent to the treaty." The Senate failed to do so and this June will mark the 35th anniversary of the unresolved legislative issue, Kraft added.

The B'nai B'rith president pointed out that the Reagan Administration has placed morality at the core of its foreign policy. "Vigorous support by the Administration of ratification of the Genocide convention now would be in keeping with this commitment," he said.

Declaring that the issue stirs the nation's conscience, Kraft told the President, "If Holocaust Day (April 29) is truly to be observed with the intention of helping prevent a repetition, a demand for ratification of the Convention is essential" and that strong Presidential leadership is required.

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JERUSALEM (JTA) — Representatives of the opposition Labor Alignment will share the platform with government ministers at the international economic conference scheduled to open here on May 20. The conference is aimed at boosting foreign investments in Israel.

# 'FEAR OF JEWISH CONTINUITY IS THE REAL ISSUE,' SCHOLAR TELLS 1,000 COMMUNAL LEADERS AT JWB CONVENTION

BOSTON, April 25 (JTA) -- "Jewish survival is not the issue. The meaning of Jewish survival is the issue," according to Prof. David Hartman of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in remarks prepared for delivery tomorrow at the JWB biennial convention at the Sheraton Boston. Some 1,000 communal leaders are scheduled to attend the convocation.

Hartman, the scholar-in-residence at the convention, says in his prepared remarks to be delivered to the opening plenary session, "The task of leadership is to develop a vision which enables Jewish continuity to be a vital framework of Jewish communal life. The Jewish community center can be a true mediator of the renaissance of the Jewish people."

Hartman notes that community centers "must mediate the vital pluralistic spiritual tensions in contemporary Jewish history. In this way, they would reflect the vitality of the ideological conflicts present in contemporary Israel. The center must mediate Israel as a living reality and not Israel as a crisis reality. Israel is an invitation for Jewish aspiration and not only an answer to Jewish fear for survival."

## Particularism Vs. Universalism

Dealing with the issue of particularism vs. universalism, Hartman says, "Particularism and the dignity of being different is a necessary condition for a vital and new world. Universalism, which seeks to obliterate differences, leads to totalitarianism and murder under the guise of justice and love."

Hartman, who is also the director of the Shalom Hartman Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, states, "Jewish leadership must reflect the spirit of Jewish history. We cannot go forward unless we start together from the spirit of the Sinai covenant. Nothing in Jewish history must be alien to the soul of a Jewish leader."

Hundreds of Jewish communal leaders from throughout the U.S., Canada, Israel, England, Argentina and Belgium, as well as U.S. Jewish military and VA chaplains and lay leaders, will gather for the five-day event to exchange ideas, to discuss crucial concerns facing the Jewish community, to engage in experiential exercises, and to hear other major speakers.

## TRADITIONAL FESTIVAL OF NORTH AFRICAN JEWS DRAWS SMALLER CROWDS THAN USUAL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 25 (JTA) -- The Mimouna, a traditional secular festival of North African Jews held on the last day of Passover, drew smaller crowds than expected to the Tel Aviv Fairgrounds yesterday, due in part to inclement weather. As a political barometer, it offered a mixed forecast.

Deputy Premier David Levy, who was born in Morocco, was easily the most popular politician at the Mimouna where he was greeted with shouts of "David, King of Israel." President Chaim Herzog, whose office is non-political, and Premier Yitzhak Shamir, received warm welcomes, too.

But for Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres, boos from the crowd drowned out a fair measure of ap-

plause. Nevertheless, the response to Peres was less hostile than in the months before the 1981 elections when he was regularly jeered by Sephardic audiences.

As requested by the organizers of the Mimouna, a group called Beyahad (Together), there were no political speeches. The public figures limited themselves to one or two minute greetings and mingled with the crowds. Beyahad insisted that the festival, a special occasion for Moroccan Jews, be made an "all-Israeli" event and ruled out electioneering.

Apart from the weather, the relatively small turnout was attributed to the locale. The Mimouna was held for the first time in Tel Aviv to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the city's founding, rather than in Jerusalem.

## RELIGIOUS JEW ACCUSED OF GRAVE-ROBBERING SAYS HE ACTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH HALACHA

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 25 (JTA) -- A religious Jew accused of grave-robbing, told a Rehovot magistrates court yesterday that he was acting in compliance with halacha when he removed the remains of Tereza Angelovitz from her grave in a Jewish cemetery two months ago after the local rabbinate claimed she was not Jewish. The woman died more than a year earlier.

Meir Agassi, 34, a Burial Society worker, was charged with the illegal disinterment and removal of a body. An accomplice, David Ehrenfeld, also 34, was charged with helping Agassi remove the body and transport it to Ramle. The bones, wrapped in plastic, were found in the Moslem cemetery there.

Angelovitz, a native of Rumania, was the wife of an Orthodox Jew whom she met in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. Although a Rumanian Catholic, she was converted to Judaism before the couple came to Israel. Their daughter was also converted to Judaism some years ago and had reportedly told the Burial Society that her mother was Jewish.

Several months after Angelovitz's death, an "informant" told the local rabbinate that she had not been properly converted. Efforts by the rabbis to have her remains removed from the Jewish cemetery were blocked by the courts.

Agassi said, "As a religious Jew I know that a non-Jew should not be interred in a Jewish cemetery... We did a very humane thing." He admitted digging up the remains at night and depositing them in the Moslem cemetery. He said he thought the cemetery was Christian because "there are some churches nearby."

## KLARSFELD AWARDED LEGION OF HONOR

PARIS, April 25 (JTA) -- Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld has been awarded the Legion of Honor for services "rendered to France and humanity as a whole." A senior member of the French government will make the actual presentation next month. Several other Jews were also given the coveted award: Jean Schwoebel and Lucien Israel, both highly respected university professors; Marcel Lupovici, a motion picture and theater producer; and Pierre Schwint, a mathematician.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Two Israeli civilians suffered slight wounds Monday when an explosive detonated on a roadside near Kalkilya in the West Bank as their car passed by, a military spokesman reported.